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Margy Gerber, et al., eds.: Studies in GDR Culture and Society 10. Selected Papers from the Fifteenth New Hampshire Symposium on the German Democratic Republic

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author's utopian design to expand the space of the individual and to instill an eagerness, particularly in women, to realize their human potential. Elke Liebs's interesting overview of the reception of myth and fairy tales in GDR prose shows with the exemplary motif of the "Nixe," of Undine and Melusine, that the origin of such figures goes back to Homer and the Old Testament and even further. GDR writers have mostly employed these Romantic figures and their subversive powers as social criticism to demonstrate the abuse of power in patriarchy and in their scientifically oriented society.

Papers in this collection dealing with the reception of Goethe's *Faust* in the GDR, or with Romantic links in Bobrowski, Huchel, Kirsten, and Braun provide ample examples of the unrest and revolutionary potential that had long been inserted in GDR literature as subtexts, disguises, or spaces of free association. This first-rate anthology should be placed on the shelf of any library or student engaged in GDR studies.

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Gerber, Margy et al., eds. *Studies in GDR Culture and Society 10: Selected Papers from the Fifteenth New Hampshire Symposium on the German Democratic Republic*. Lanham, New York, London: University Press of America, 1991.

This group of essays was originally presented as papers in June, 1989 at the well-established New Hampshire symposium. They are the first essays to be published in this series since the changes in East and West Germany, and thus were presented in a radically different context from that of today. Yet the editors and authors have done a commendable job of demonstrating the relevance of each essay to both historical events and the present situation.

Of the twelve papers, the first five concern politics and political theory; one is about GDR film, and the last six address the literature of such writers as Franz Fühmann, Helga Königsdorf, and the so-called "Sächsische Dichterschule." The first six essays are in English as are two of the six literary essays; so those topics which might interest specialists not familiar with the language are accessible to the widest possible audience.

The first essay, by Mike Dennis, addresses the failed relationship between GDR socialism and scientific-technical progress. Among his conclusions he cites these observations: "the economy was clearly insufficiently flexible to close the technology gap with the advanced Western industrial countries and it was faltering under increasing strain from the flow of resources into the social welfare program and the costly autarchic high-tech strategy" (28). It makes good, informative reading, with clear arguments leading into the actual events of late 1989.

The next article, by Hubertus Knabe, describes itself as a study of "pre-Wende debate about democratic reform," with special focus on "Legitimacy and Legitimization in the GDR" (31). It is a detailed and lively account, which points to the role of the Protestant churches as a forum for debate and outlines "the deficits in the legitimation of political rule" (51). As a document of events preceding change, its value is clear and its scholarship commendable.

Uwe-Jens Heuer's essay "The Classic Concept of Democracy and Our Times" (53-64) is a nice complement to Knabe's article because its theoretical approach broadens one's sense

of the concept of democracy, particularly as that term is used in political systems which contrast with capitalism. The author relates his discussion to events in the GDR and other Eastern European countries in a helpful, convincing way.

The last two articles in the "social sciences" group are "The Relationship of Socio-Structural Development and Political Culture in the GDR: Hypotheses" by Dietrich Staritz (65-73) and "New Research Results and Tendencies in GDR Historiography: A Paper and a Necessary Addendum" by Rolf Badstübner (75-83). Their titles are accurately descriptive and their contents of great general interest.

In the film and literary essays which follow, there is a fascinating variety of approaches while at the same time certain common threads of social criticism and personal alienation become visible in each. Barton Byg's essay "Two Approaches to GDR History in DEFA Films" (85-103) has the special strength of describing each of three films "that successfully portray postwar developments over the period from 1945 to 1965" (89). These may not be as familiar to the interested reader as other films of a similar period and they are therefore of considerable interest.

There are two different essays on Helga Königsdorf's *Respektloser Umgang* (Nancy A. Lauckner, "The Treatment of the Past and Future in Helga Königsdorf's *Respektloser Umgang*: 'Sich der Erinnerung weihen oder für die Zukunft antreten? Mit der Vergangenheit im Bunde'" [151-164] and Jeanette Clausen, "Resisting Objectification: Helga Königsdorf's Lise Meitner" [165-180]). The juxtaposition of these two very different but mutually enriching and well-written essays is quite fruitful. Each is certainly to be recommended.

The last two essays are original in their conception and very good. Reinhard Andress discusses "Feudal-absolutistisches Barock and DDR-Literaturverhältnisse: Johann Christian Günther in Joachim Walthers Roman *Bewerbung bei Hofe*" (181-196). In this essay, as in the preceding two, the author considers the use of a historical figure in a novel, but here he is able to add greatly to the depth of his analysis because of his own personal conversations with Joachim Walther. For this reason, the reader is in the felicitous position of looking forward to footnotes as well as text while reading a discussion of ethos and responsibility in two different, but perhaps comparable, ages.

The last essay, "Lyrik der 'Sächsischen Dichterschule'" by Gerrit-Jan Berendse, is a particular pleasure because there seem to be so few essays offered in recent years which address lyric poetry as a genre, closely consider variant versions of single poems, attempt to define poems by theme or offer a coherent view of a group of contemporary poets—all of which this essay is able to accomplish. Whether the terms used here find wide acceptance or not, this creative view of poetry by such authors as Heinz Czechowski, Karl Mickel and B.K. Tragelehn (all born in Dresden) as well as Rainer Kirsch, Rainer Kunze and others (born in Saxony) is one which will challenge and perhaps even delight the reader.

These twelve essays, nicely grouped and balanced, full of insight, originality and historical significance, compose one of the most successful sets of papers of high quality which a reader could wish to find.

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